



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



WELCOME HOME, DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY FOR SD GUARD UNITS

A joint welcome home and deployment ceremony is scheduled for two Rapid City-based South Dakota Army National Guard units on Saturday, May 14, at 11 a.m. at the Aviation Readiness Center next to Rapid City Regional Airport.

Seven soldiers with Detachment 5, Company C, 2-641st Aviation Regiment, will be welcomed home after completing a nine-month deployment to Djibouti, Africa.

Ten soldiers with the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment will also be honored as they depart for a nine-month deployment to Europe.

The public is encouraged to attend the event. Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Kristi Noem, Sen. Mike Rounds, and Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general.

The 2-641st recently completed their deployment in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, where the unit provided aviation transportation and movement of critical equipment, supplies, parts, and personnel in the region. The 2-641st is a fixed-wing aviation unit comprised of pilots and operations specialists which operate the C-12 King Air.

The 129th will provide public affairs support to units within the European Command area of operation. The unit is comprised of officers and mass communications specialists which gather and distribute print and broadcast media, facilitate civilian news media, and support command communication initiatives.

The 129th soldiers will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas.

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SDDVA TO HOST TWO MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAMS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host two Memorial Day programs this year. Both events will be held on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30.

In western South Dakota, the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home will host the Memorial Day program on their campus (2500 Minnekahta Avenue) in Hot Springs. The program will begin at 10:00 am (MT). Immediately following the program, a lunch will be served by the Custer VFW Auxiliary. If inclement weather occurs, the program will be held at the Mueller Center (801 S. 6th Street) in Hot Springs.

In eastern South Dakota, the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery will host a Memorial Day program, in partnership with the Sioux Falls Veterans Council. The program will begin at 10:00 am (CT) and will be held at the SD Veterans Cemetery (25965 477th Avenue) in Sioux Falls. River Cities Public Transit will be providing transportation to and from the program. Bus rides to the event will originate at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street) starting at 8:30 am and will return attendees to the Alliance following the ceremony. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs with them.

The South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance will be offering a full menu for anyone wanting to stop for lunch after the program, and will be offering free shooting for veterans in the gun range.

SDDVA HOLDS MINI CONFERENCES

This week, SDDVA hosted mini conferences in Rapid City, Pierre, and Brookings. The conferences afford SDDVA the opportunity to provide training and update county and tribal veterans service officers (CTVSOs) on programs and services for veterans.

Topics at the spring conferences included gatekeeper training for suicide prevention, bilateral hearing loss, tinnitus, permanent and total disability, and individual unemployability.

The suicide prevention training was provided by contractors through the SD Department of Social Services. The remaining topics were presented by SDDVA State Veterans Service Officer Thomas Skinner.

The next training opportunity for CTVSOs is SDDVA's annual benefit school August 15-17 in Pierre.



SD GUARD, SURINAME PARTNER TOGETHER TO RENOVATE SCHOOL, PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICES

About 30 soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard traveled to the South American country of Suriname to provide engineer support for a school renovation and medical and dental services in several community locations, April 18 through May 3.

The renovation project and healthcare missions were conducted as part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program to provide training for military personnel while simultaneously assisting in worthy community needs and by improving the school's infrastructure and improving systemic and oral health for Suriname residents.

The State Partnership Program seeks to strengthen ties through engagement activities and share experiences and best practices through a variety of military training exchanges. Funding for the project was provided by the National Guard Bureau and all materials and supplies were purchased in Suriname through U.S. Southern Command's Humanitarian Civil Assistance program.

"The partnership between the Suriname Defense Force and the SDNG continues to grow strong and is seen in the collaboration for this event," said Maj. Melody Howell, bilateral affairs officer - Security Cooperation Office in Suriname. "Continued support from NGB, SOUTHCOM, and the U.S. Embassy helps make events like this possible."

A dozen soldiers from the 842nd Engineer Company worked alongside about a dozen Suriname Defense Force engineers on renovations for the Magenta Polder Elementary School. Renovations consisted of rebuilding and repairing bathrooms, wall sections, doors, locks and screens, bathroom toilets, faucets, ceiling tiles, and replacing all lights with LED fixtures.

(continued)



SURINAME (CONTINUED)

Eighteen soldiers from the SDNG's 730th Area Support Medical Company, Medical Command and 114th Medical Group worked alongside 10 Suriname Defense Force medics to provide health services to residents in the rural communities of Atjoni, Brownsweg, and Brokopondo. The team saw over 2,000 medical and dental patients where they conducted health screenings and small in/outpatient procedures.

Materials and medicine funding for the medical and dental services was \$15,000 for each location for a total of \$45,000.

"We were very excited to see this project get funded and approved," said Lt. Col. Stephen E. Sewell III, State Partnership Program coordinator and project officer. "The SDNG has proven once again that, if given resources, we will produce outstanding results."

South Dakota and Suriname, in coordination with U.S. Southern Command, established a successful security cooperation relationship in 2006 under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. Since then, numerous exchanges have taken place between the SDNG and Suriname's Defense Forces to share experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics.



The State Partnership Program provides unique capacity-building capabilities to combatant commanders through partnerships between the United States and foreign countries. The program helps to support U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations through military-to-military exchanges.

The partnership has made an impact to both organizations over the past 16 years. Every year, nearly a dozen exchanges take place between SDNG and SDF service members that enhances training, skills, techniques, and operational processes and procedures.



GOVERNOR NOEM MARKS MAY 8-14 AS PREVENTION WEEK IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Governor Kristi Noem has proclaimed May 8-14, as Prevention Week in South Dakota to help promote substance use prevention and positive mental health in the state.

“Prevention Week is a time to re-focus prevention efforts within our schools and communities by raising awareness, reducing stigma, engaging with partners, and promoting resources,” said Department of Social Services Cabinet Secretary Laurie Gill. “South Dakota has a robust prevention network covering every corner of the state that works very hard to help improve people’s lives.”

DSS partners with the 20 contracted coalitions and three Prevention Resource Centers that make up the South Dakota Prevention Network to provide prevention education and services in schools and communities, serving individuals of all ages.

“Substance use prevention places a focus on helping people develop the knowledge, attitude, and skills needed to make good choices and reduce the harmful behaviors of substance misuse or abuse,” Gill said. “Prevention efforts are tailored around the needs of communities, using effective community-based, school-based and individual evidence-based programs.”

School-based programming focuses on classroom presentations, early identification, screening, and referral to services. Community-based programming focuses on establishing or changing community standards, policies, and attitudes towards substance use. Individual-based programming focuses on targeted interventions to high-risk individuals to reduce the likelihood of an individual developing a substance use disorder.

Prevention Week also focuses on helping stop suicides. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in South Dakota. The Department of Social Services in collaboration with the Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Tribal Relations, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Great Plain Tribal Leader’s Health Board is committed to reducing the incidence of suicide in South Dakota. “Prevention takes a whole community approach, and we all have a part to play,” Gill said. “Sometimes you need the right tools to start the conversation.”

Free toolkits are available for communities and schools to help start the conversation about suicide including step by step guides to engage in suicide prevention. Toolkits are targeted to specific populations like employers, Native Americans, healthcare organizations, seniors, and military members and Veterans. There are also toolkits for high schools and colleges.

For more information, please visit sdsuicideprevention.org/toolkits/community or contact state Prevention Program staff at 605.367.5236. Suicide prevention materials are also available to order at sdsuicideprevention.org/get-help/order-materials.

To learn more about South Dakota’s prevention services, visit <https://dss.sd.gov/behavioralhealth/services.aspx>.

19th Annual

September 14-17, 2022

BLACK HILLS VETERANS MARCH
AND MARATHON

The Black Hills Veterans March and Marathon is an annual trek through the beautiful terrain of the Black Hills of South Dakota. Beginning in the morning, this event occurs along the Mickelson Trail and travels through historic Black Hills sites, ending in exciting Deadwood, South Dakota. This march and marathon pays tribute to the many sacrifices that this nation's veterans have made in the past and continue to make today. All proceeds are used to directly support veterans.

EVENTS INCLUDED

110-Mile Endurance
26.2 Mile Walk/Run/Relay
16-Mile Walk/Run/Relay

DIVISIONS

Military Team or Solo
Civilian Team or Solo
Heavy Pack Challenge

**REGISTER NOW!**<https://blackhillsveteranmarch.org/>**UPCOMING EVENTS**

May 14—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9

May 14—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—
Doors open at 7:30 pm and program at 9:00 pm (CT)

May 14-15—Ellsworth AFB Air Show

May 21—Armed Forces Day

May 30—Memorial Day Program—SD Veterans Cemetery—(25965 477th Avenue)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)

May 30—Memorial Day Program—Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home —(2500 Minnekahta Avenue)—Hot
Springs—10:00 am (MT)

May 30—State Offices Closed

Jun 1—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 10

Jun 1—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 10 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—
Doors open at 7:30 pm and program at 9:00 pm (CT)

Jun 9-12—State VFW Convention—4-H Fairgrounds—(3200 W Havens Avenue)—Mitchell

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride—SD Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls
Jun 14—Flag Day
Jun 16-19—State American Legion Conference—Watertown
Jun 18—Midwest Honor Flight 3rd Reunion—Sioux Falls Convention Center—11:00 am (CT)
Jun 19—Father's Day
Jun 25—Lake County Abate Poker Run for Midwest Honor Flight
Jun 29-Jul 4—Parkston's Celebration of Freedom—City Park—Parkston
Jul 4—Independence Day
Jul 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls
Aug 6-9—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 14-19—Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention—Rapid City
Aug 15-17—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School
Aug 18-23—USS Iowa Veterans Association Reunion—Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center—Rapid City
Aug 22—The Barrel House Day of Giving fundraiser for Midwest Honor Flight—Sioux Falls
Sep 1—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
Sep 1-5—South Dakota State Fair
Sep 5—Labor Day
Sep 10—Heroes Helping with Horsepower Military Appreciation Event—W. Main Street—Ethan—Festivities begin at 8:00 am (CT)
Sep 14-17—Black Hills Veterans March
Oct 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Oct 10—Native American Day
Oct 15—Midwest Honor Flight Fifth Annual Hangar Dance—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Nov 5—We've Got Your Six Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Nov 11—Veterans Day
Nov 24—Thanksgiving Day
Dec 6—Governor's Budget Address
Dec 17—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
Dec 25—Christmas
Jan 10—Governor's State of the State Address

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